David Hislop KC

Call: 1979

Silk: 2010

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Profile

David is currently co Team Leader of the DSC Crime Team. David's long and varied career at Bar has allowed him to achieve expertise in a number of areas, from murder and terrorism to the fine arts of fraud, cross-border crime, money laundering, and regulatory work. For the last 14 years, he has specialised in the defence of those charged with murder or the most serious of sexual and drugs offences. He is especially known for his expertise in cross-examining prosecution experts in pathology and DNA.

Popular with clients, David is known for his industry and ability to scythe through vast mountains of paperwork to drill down to the real issues in a case. He has a well-deserved reputation as a persuasive jury advocate with *"…a preparedness to defend the indefensible and win…".*

What people are saying about David

He is regularly ranked in the *Legal 500* and *Chambers and Partners* in the General Crime Category:

“…sought-after silk with an extensive career at the general criminal Bar. He is particularly experienced in representing clients involved in multi-handed homicides in the context of organised crime.” “Always gets good results.”- Legal 500, 2027

“…is an absolutely outstanding advocate. Brilliant cross-examination skills. Meticulous preparation. Case winning closing speeches. Personable.”- Chambers and Partners, 2027

"David is great and a silk who doesn't stand on ceremony, but just wants to get the job done. He's an immediately reassuring figure, who quickly grasps the issues in a case."—Chambers and Partners, 2026

"David is an exceptional lawyer who possesses the knowledge one might expect given his experience. Beyond that he has a sage-like wisdom which sets him apart from many others." —Chambers and Partners, 2025

“David’s strengths are his advocacy, tenacious cross-examination, and tactical decision making in handling tricky witnesses. Juries love him. He has an ability to get on a case quickly and assimilate large quantities of paperwork. David is respected by all.”—Legal 500, 2025

"He is a very jury-friendly, personable and down-to-earth advocate."—Chambers and Partners, 2024

“Absolutely brilliant, and someone with a vast array of knowledge. He is a nuclear option.” —Chambers and Partners, 2023

"David is very charismatic as well as being able to apply his formidable mind to a wide range of legal predicaments."—Legal 500, 2023

“David Hislop KC is a sought-after silk with an extensive career at the general criminal Bar. He is particularly experienced in representing clients involved in multi-handed homicides in the context of organised crime."—Chambers and Partners, 2022

"David is incredibly versatile. He is able to apply his formidable mind to an array of complex situations and he is able to instil justified confidence in his team. His written advices are particularly helpful although he is extremely good in client conferences as he adapts well to his variety of clientele. Best of all, he is magnificent on his feet commanding respect from the courts he addresses. The opposition should be nervous if David is instructed. His preparation is meticulous and ingenious. David is respected and admired by clients and professionals alike."—Legal 500, 2022

"He is a wonderful lawyer. He is hugely charismatic, massively persuasive and devastatingly effective. Nothing is impossible with David on your side."—Legal 500, 2021

"A superb tactician who fights to the end."—Legal 500, 2020

Education

LLB (Auckland University)

Diploma, National Institute Trial Advocacy (Denver University, Colarado)

Advanced Diploma, National Institute Trial Advocacy (Hofstra University, New York)

Related practice areas

Criminal Law
Criminal Appeals

Homicide and Related Grave Offences

David is a highly regarded senior Silk in this area and is ranked by *Chambers & Partners* and *Legal 500*.

Cases include:

- Street killings/murder:

2026:

- R v A - A charged with murder as a result of a shooting outside a nightclub. After 10 weeks of trial the jury were unable to agree and a retrial has been ordered.
- R v S - S is charged with the murder by shooting of his wife's lover outside the family home. The defendant denies intending to kill him. The jury is currently in retirement.

2025:

- R v PM charged with murdering her boyfriend, the allegation was she kicked him to death. He was an alcoholic and chronically ill with cirrhosis of the liver. The defence run was a complex causation of death defence. Defendant found guilty of murder.
- R v B - defendant alleged to have cut his father in laws throat. The defendant claimed at the material Tim he was suffering with schizophrenia and was suffering a psychotic episode. After complex arguments the psychiatrists eventually agreed that the psychiatric condition was brought on by the voluntary consumption of cannabis and alcohol. Defendant then pleaded guilty.

2024:

- R v Vankovs: The acquittal for murder, of a homeless man caught on CCTV stabbing his assailant in self-defence.
- R v Simon Brown: Brown was acquitted of murdering a paedophile in a drunken rage sucessfully running lack of intention to kill.
- R v Jobe & Ors : Jobe was convicted of murder having been a primary assailant in a gang related ride out.

2023:

- R v McHugh & Another: McHugh and his co-defendant blamed eacch other for murder. On behalf of McHugh a Blood Pattern Analysis Expert was deployed. McHugh was acquitted of murder, his co-defendant was convicted.
- R v Omar &Ors, Omar was convicted after trial having sought to run self-defence. The victim dies of 10 stab wounds to the back.
- R v Muinami & Ors: This was a man convicted of murder, a stabbing caught on CCTV outside a nightclub. The case involved a significant challenge to CCTV evidence and the admissibility of prison telephone calls.

2022:

- R v William Hardy & Ors: Hardy was acquitted of an alleged revenge shooting of a man outside HMP Pentonville Prison.
- R v Ternent & Anor : Ternent ran the defence of loss of control having run over the deceased several times in a drugs related revenge attack.
- R v Olabisi & Ors: Olabisi was acquitted of murder in what the prosecution alleged was a gang related revenge murder.

2021:

- R v Boyland & Ors: Boyland was acquitted of murder after an alleged gang related attack in the streets of Oxford.
- R v O'Neal Josep: Joseph unsuccessfully ran the defence of self-defence in a knife attack in the suburban streets of Reading.
- R v Denis Jones: Jones was acquitted of the murder of an ex-paratrooper who broke into his bedroom in the night. The defence successfully deployed a Blood Pattern Analyst to debunk the Prosecution theory of how the killing occurred.

Business Crime and Investigations

David is a senior member of Doughty Street's Business Crime Team and a recognised specialist in white-collar crime. He has extensive trial experience in cases of serious fraud, money laundering, Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) fraud, insider trading, and banking fraud. He has recently trained officers from the National Crime Agency in aspects of money laundering and expert evidence. He has had notable successes in defending those charged with money laundering offences, including most famously one of the Meghrabi brothers in the notorious Operation Aloof money laundering.

Criminal Appeals

David regularly appears for appellants in the Court of Appeal both on matters of conviction and sentence. Over the years he has a large number of notable successes. His tenacity on appeal is exemplified by R v Seeveratnam. S was convicted of murder and his trial counsel advised against appeal. David reviewed the trial transcripts and successfully appealed the conviction for murder. A retrial was ordered and S was acquitted of murder but convicted of manslaughter. David took that conviction back to the Court of Appeal and the conviction was quashed and no retrial ordered.

David has also two very notable successes in the Privy Council:

- R v Lundy - (2013) the double murder convictions from New Zealand quashed. The Privy Council described the case for the Appellant to be "closely and persuasively argued."
- R v Palmer (Vybez Kartel) & Ors – Privy Council (2024) conviction for murder quashed, Kartell having served 13 years in prison before David agreed to review his trial transcripts and drafted grounds of appeal.

Publications

David served as the author of the Fraud section on Westlaw's *On-Line Encyclopedia* for several years. He was a contributing author to *The Practitioners Guide to the Law and Regulation of Financial Crime*, providing specialist chapters on Bribery and Corruption and Search Warrants and Production Orders. He has also authored a number of specialist articles on money laundering, banks, and their customers, restraint orders, consumer protection legislation, and insider trading.